

17 April 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR ACTING DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Significant Differences from NATO Standing Group Estimate in US Position Paper

REFERENCE: Attached Memorandum from Director, CIA, to Chairman, USIB, dated 15 April 1962 paragraph 4, and list of significant differences from US Position Paper

1. This memorandum requires your action at the USIB meeting tomorrow morning in connection with item 7 on the USIB agenda, Soviet Bloc Strength and Capabilities, IC 4/271 (SG), 6 April 1962.
2. There is an additional major difference from the US Position Paper in the NATO Standing Group Estimate which was not cited in the DIA memorandum. It is suggested that this matter be pointed out to USIB members in view of the political sensitivity of the subject involved -- the likelihood of limited war between the Soviet Bloc and members of NATO.
3. The US Position Paper (Part I, Sect., 5, paras 41-43) estimates that initiation of limited war by the Soviet Bloc is possible now, if the risk of escalation to general war does not appear too great, and that present restraints on the Soviets will diminish in the future as their nuclear delivery capability more nearly balances ours. The US Position Paper states that at present the Soviets might engage in limited military action, possibly with their own forces, but would probably seek to terminate hostilities if they believed that continued military action entailed a serious risk of general war. For the future, the Paper states that Bloc leaders probably feel that they now possess a counter deterrent which is becoming increasingly persuasive vis-a-vis the West's deterrent, and that the range of anti-Western actions which the Soviets can pursue with little fear of nuclear retaliation is growing. The US Position Paper concludes by stating Under those circumstances, the Bloc leaders probably feel that in carefully chosen circumstances they could wage limited

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war with Communist supported, or even with Bloc forces, without incurring serious risk of general war. This Paper was approved by the USIB on 7 February 1962.

4. The NATO Standing Group Estimate (Part I: Sect., 5, paras 16-19) takes a much more negative position on the likelihood of Soviet Bloc initiation of limited war at present and drops any reference to the Soviet attitude toward limited war a few years hence. This Estimate states that while it is possible that limited war could occur through miscalculation, it is not believed that the Soviet leaders intend to initiate limited hostilities in the NATO area. The Estimate also states that initiation of limited war or the overt use of Soviet forces in areas outside NATO is considered unlikely during the period under review (1962-1966). In contrast to the US Position Paper, the NATO estimate envisages limited war arising only as a result of Soviet miscalculation.

5. I believe it is clear that there has been a change in emphasis in the Limited War section to the extent that the Standing Group Estimate would not now support US efforts to persuade its NATO allies of the need to increase conventional military forces to meet the threat of limited war. The US Position Paper was obviously written to support our efforts in NATO. This controversy is still very much alive and will be pressed once more by Secretary McNamara at the NATO Ministerial Meeting in Athens in early May. It could be embarrassing to the US Government (and to the USIB) if our NATO allies were to cite the Standing Group Estimate to resist US pressures for more conventional buildup in NATO.

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